

2002-2003 Waterfowl Seasons & Bag Limits

The Board of Game and Inland Fisheries adopted the 2002-2003 waterfowl seasons and bag limits at its meeting on Thursday, August 22.

What's New for 2002-2003

Season and Bag Limit on Ducks

- The duck season has been extended to January 25.
- The duck season has been divided into three segments.
- The canvasback season has been closed.
- The pintail season has been reduced to 30 days.
- Black ducks will remain closed during the October segment, but will be open for the rest of the season.

Canada Goose Seasons and Zones

- The boundary between the Eastern and Western Canada goose zones has been changed.
- The season in the Eastern Canada goose zone has been expanded from 30 to 45 days and has been extended to January 25.

Atlantic Brant Season

- The brant season has been expanded from 50 to 60 days.
- Daily bag limit has increased from 2 to 3 brant per day.
- The season has been extended to January 25.

Attention Migratory Game Bird Hunters!

All hunters planning to hunt coots, doves, gallinules, moorhens, rails, snipe, waterfowl, and woodcock, must register each year with the Virginia Harvest Information Program (HIP). Hunters can call **1-800-WETLAND (938-5263)** and receive a registration number before hunting these migratory game birds. Hunters can also register over the Internet through [this website](#). **Hunters must obtain a new HIP number each year.**

Hunting Seasons and Bag Limits

No person shall take migratory game birds except during the hours open to shooting and hawking as prescribed. Shooting and hawking hours for all waterfowl, all seasons, is 1/2 hour before sunrise until sunset. See sunrise-sunset timetable.

REGULAR DUCK SEASONS:

- [Status of Ducks \(August 2002\) fact sheet](#)

Season Dates:	October 9 - 12 (Black Duck closed) October 19 (Youth Waterfowl Hunting Day; see details below) November 16 - December 7; December 14 - January 25 (Pintail open only Dec. 23-Jan. 25)
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Bag Limit:	Bag limit of 5 ducks which may include no more than 4
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mallards (which may include no more than 2 hen mallards), 3 scaup, 4 scoters, 2 wood ducks, 2 redheads, 1 pintail (during open season of Dec. 23-Jan. 25), 1 black duck (except closed during Oct. 9-12), 1 mottled duck, and 1 fulvous whistling duck. The possession limit is twice the daily bag limit. Closed season on Canvasback and Harlequin duck.

Youth Waterfowl Hunting Day:

For the 2002-2003 season, regulations and guidelines for the special Youth Waterfowl Hunting Day are as follows:

- The daily bag limit includes ducks, mergansers, coots, moorhens, and gallinules and is the same as that allowed in the regular season. Flyway special restrictions remain in effect.
- Youth hunters must be 15 years of age or younger. Youth 12 years of age or older will need a valid Virginia state hunting license.
- A licensed adult at least 18 years of age or older must accompany the youth hunter into the field. This adult may not duck hunt, but may participate in other open seasons.

Other Duck Seasons:

SEA DUCKS (SCOTER, LONG-TAILED DUCK (FORMERLY OLDSQUAW), AND EIDER):

Season Dates:

October 9 - January 20*

Bag Limit

Within the Sea Duck Zone (see below):

7 birds per day, but may include no more than 4 scoters (14 in possession, no more than 8 scoters).

***NOTE:**

The Special Sea Duck Season in the Sea Duck Zone runs from October 9 - January 20. After January 20, sea ducks must be counted as part of the regular duck daily bag limit of 5, even if hunting in the Sea Duck Zone.

Sea Duck Zone Definition:

The sea duck zone is defined as those waters at a distance greater than 800 yards from any shore, island or emergent vegetation in the following area: The ocean water of the City of Virginia Beach below the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel seaward of Rt. 60 and of Back Bay and its tributaries, the tidal waters of Northampton and Accomack counties and the Chesapeake Bay and each of its tributaries up to the first highway bridge, but exclusive of that portion of the Chesapeake

Bay known generally as Pocomoke Sound bounded by a line beginning on the western shore of Smith Island and extending southeastward to the southwest shore of the hook of Tangier Island, and thence extending easterly to the southern tip of Parkers Marsh at the mouth of the Onancock Creek. The highways with bridges making up the boundary are Rt. 644 and 200 in Northumberland County, Rt. 3 from Kilmamock in Lancaster County to Middlesex County, Rt. 3 in Middlesex and Mathews Counties, Rt. 3 and 17 in Gloucester County to York County, Rt. 17 in York County and Rt. 17 and I-64 in Newport News and Hampton.

COOT:

Season Dates: October 9 - 12
 October 19 (Youth Waterfowl Hunting Day; see details below)
 November 16 - December 7; December 14 - January 25

Bag Limit: 15 daily (30 in possession)

MERGANSE:

Season Dates: October 9 - 12
 October 19 (Youth Waterfowl Hunting Day; see details below)
 November 16 - December 7; December 14 - January 25

Bag Limit: 5 per day, only 1 of which may be a hooded merganser (10 in possession, only 2 of which may be hooded mergansers)

GALLINULE/MOORHEN:

Season Dates: October 9-12, November 16-December 7, December 14-January 20

Bag Limit: 15 daily (30 in possession)

SEPTEMBER TEAL

Season Dates: September 14–September 24

Bag Limit: 4 teal daily (any combination of blue-winged and green-winged teal), 8 in possession

Hunt Area: East of I-95 only.

SEPTEMBER CANADA GOOSE

• [Status of Resident Canada Geese \(August 2002\) fact sheet](#)

Season Dates: September 2–September 25

Bag Limit: 5 daily, 10 in possession

SNOW GOOSE:

- [Status of Snow Geese, Atlantic Brant, and Tundra Swan \(August 2002\) fact sheet](#)

Season Dates: November 6 - March 10

Bag Limit: 15 birds daily (no possession limit)

ATLANTIC BRANT:

- [Status of Snow Geese, Atlantic Brant, and Tundra Swan \(August 2002\) fact sheet](#)

Season Dates: November 16 - December
7
December 10 - January
25

Bag Limit: 3 birds daily (6 in possession)

TUNDRA SWAN:

***** This is a special managed hunt. Permit required. [Learn more here.](#)**

- [Status of Snow Geese, Atlantic Brant, and Tundra Swan \(August 2002\) fact sheet](#)

Season Dates: December 2 - January 31

Bag Limit: One per permittee per season

Note: The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries will issue no more than 600 swan hunting permits to holders of a valid Virginia hunting license. Only hunters with a valid 2002-2003 tundra swan hunting permit issued by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries shall be authorized to hunt tundra swans. Each permit holder will be authorized to take only one tundra swan during the season. Swan hunting permits and metal seals are non-transferable and are valid for use only by the person to whom they are issued. Permits and metal seals must be in the immediate possession of the permittee while swan hunting. Immediately at the time and place of kill, successful hunters must cancel their swan hunting permit by permanently recording the month and day of kill and by attaching the Department's metal seal to the swan as instructed on the permit. The Department will attempt to direct hunter activity toward areas of high swan concentrations and locations with crop depredation.

Hunt Area: All counties and portions of counties lying east of U.S. Route I-95 and south of the Prince William-Stafford County line in Chopawamsic Creek at Quantico Marine Corps base.

Possession Limits

After opening day, possession limit is equal to two daily limits, (except snow geese where the possession limit has been removed), but no one is allowed to have more than one daily bag limit of game in his possession while in the forests, fields or waters of this state. Wounded birds reduced to possession shall be immediately killed

and included in the daily bag limit.

Licenses

(Licenses issued by the Department are sold by clerks of the Circuit Court in some counties, Corporation Courts of the cities and other authorized agents* A \$.50 issuance fee will be added to each license.)

County or city resident to hunt in county or city of residence	\$ 5.00
State resident to hunt statewide	\$12.00
State resident junior (15 years and under) to hunt statewide	\$ 7.50
State resident youth combination license (12-15 years old)	\$15.00
Senior citizen license to hunt	\$ 1.00
Nonresident to hunt statewide	\$60.00
Federal migratory bird hunting stamp to take wild ducks, geese, brant, and swans required of persons 16 years of age and over in addition to hunting license and sold at U.S. Post Offices	\$15.00
Stationary shore blind*	\$17.50
Floating blind	\$35.00
Virginia Harvest Information Program (HIP) call 1-800-WETLAND (938-5263) or see our online HIP page to obtain registration number	free
2001 Virginia migratory waterfowl stamp (Voluntary; available by contacting Ducks Unlimited at (757) 220-3144, fax at (757) 220-1382, or www.Ducks-Unlimited-Va.Org	5.00

**All applications for stationary blind licenses must be made to the clerk of the circuit court or license agent of the county wherein or nearest to which the blind site is located or in which it is to be used. With each license the clerk or agent delivers a metal license plate which is to be affixed to the blind where it may be easily observed. Holders of blind licenses may renew their privileges each year by licensing within the time required The exclusive privileges given owners and their lessees and permittees are recurrent each year even if these privileges were forfeited to some other person or persons in the preceding year. If any blind is destroyed in any manner beyond the control of the owner it may be replaced within 30 days without losing the position which it formerly occupied. Those licensing stationary blinds in the public water must remove them when the licenses are allowed to expire or when they no longer intend to use them.*

Lawful Hunting Methods

1. All migratory game birds may be taken by the aid of dogs, artificial decoys, manually or mouth-operated bird calls, with longbow and arrow, or with a shotgun (not larger than 10 gauge and incapable of holding more than three shells) fired from the shoulder; and by means of falconry.
2. All migratory game birds may be taken in the open, or from a blind or other place of concealment (except a sinkbox) on land or water camouflaged with natural vegetation, or with vegetation from agricultural crops, as long as such camouflaging does not result in the exposing, depositing, distributing or scattering of grain or other feed. (The term “sinkbox” refers to a raft or any type of low floating device having a depression which affords a hunter a means of concealing himself below the surface of the water).
3. All migratory game birds may be taken from floating craft (except a sinkbox), including those propelled by motor, sail and wind, or both, when (1) the motor of such craft has been completely shut off and/or the sails furled as the case may be and its progress therefrom has ceased; and (2) it is drifting, beached, moored, resting at anchor, or it is being propelled by paddle, oars, or pole. Craft under power may be used to retrieve dead or crippled birds. Crippled birds may not be shot from such craft under power except shooting of crippled waterfowl from a motorboat under power is permitted in those areas described, delineated and designated as special sea duck hunting areas (see page 2).
4. All migratory game birds may be taken on or over standing crops or flooded standing crops (including aquatics); flooded harvested croplands; or lands or areas where seeds or grains have been scattered solely as the result of “normal agricultural planting, harvesting, post harvest manipulation or normal soil stabilization practice” that is conducted in accordance with official recommendations of county State Extension Specialists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. (Agricultural practices for hunting are limited to those undertaken to produce and gather a crop and manage the field afterwards).
5. All migratory game birds may be taken on or over standing, flooded, or manipulated natural vegetation. There is no restriction on when manipulation may occur. Planted millet is not considered natural vegetation unless it becomes naturalized and grows on its own in subsequent years.
6. All migratory game birds may be taken over surface-mined lands being reclaimed where seeds or grains are scattered solely as a result of normal soil stabilization practice.
7. All migratory game birds may be taken over standing or flooded standing agricultural crops where hunters have inadvertently scattered grain solely as a result of entering or leaving the field, placing decoys, or retrieving downed birds.

Unlawful Hunting Methods

1. Migratory game birds may not be taken with a trap, snare, net, crossbow and arrow, rifle, pistol, swivel gun, or machine gun.

2. Migratory game birds may not be taken with a shotgun of any description originally capable of holding more than three shells, the magazine of which has not been cut off, altered, or plugged with a one-piece metal or wooden filler, incapable of removal without disassembling the gun, so as to reduce the capacity of the said gun to not more than three shells in the magazine and chamber combined.

3. Migratory game birds may not be taken from or by means, aid, or use of a sinkbox, motor-driven conveyance, motor vehicle, or aircraft of any kind;

4. Migratory game birds may not be taken from or by means of a sailboat or other boat or floating craft having a motor attached unless the motor has been completely shut off and/or sails furled and its progress therefrom has ceased.

5. Migratory game birds may not be taken by means or aid of any motor-driven land, water, or air conveyance or sailboat used for the purpose of or resulting in the concentrating, driving, rallying, or stirring up of waterfowl and coots.

6. Migratory game birds may not be taken by the use or aid of livestock as a blind or means of concealment.

7. Migratory game birds may not be taken by the use or aid of live birds as decoys;

8. Migratory game birds may not be taken by the use or aid of recorded bird calls or sounds, or recorded or electrically amplified imitations of bird calls or sounds.

9. Migratory game birds may not be taken by the aid of baiting, or on, or over any baited area. As used in this section, "baiting" shall mean the direct or indirect placing, exposing, depositing, distributing, or scattering of salt, grain, or other feed that could serve as a lure or attraction for migratory game birds to, on, or over any areas where hunters are attempting to take them; and "baited area" means any area on which salt, grain, or other feed has been placed, exposed, deposited, distributed, or scattered, if that salt, grain, or other feed could serve as a lure or attraction for migratory game birds to, on, or over areas where hunters are attempting to take them. Any such area will remain a baited area for 10 days following the complete removal of all such salt, grain, or other feed. Hunters may be charged with hunting over bait if they "know or reasonably should know" that the area is a baited area. The placing or directing the placement of bait on or adjacent to an area for the purpose of causing, inducing, or allowing any person to take or attempt to take any migratory game bird by the aid of baiting or on or over a baited area constitutes a separate offense.

10. Waterfowl may not be hunted over manipulated planted millet, or over seed or grain from manipulated agricultural crops or normal agricultural operations except where seed or grain is present solely as a result of normal planting, harvesting or post-harvest manipulation or a normal soil stabilization practice conducted in accordance with official recommendations of county State Extension Specialists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Possession and Transportation

Possession limits apply to transportation of game killed on more than one day.

Ownership and possession of birds legally taken by any hunter is deemed to have ceased when such birds have been delivered by him to (1) a post office, (2) a common carrier; or (3) a commercial cold-storage or locker plant for transportation to some person other than the hunter. No person may possess over the daily limit of any wild bird or animal while in the forests, fields or waters of this state. Any person without a permit, may possess and transport for his own use the plumage and skins of lawfully taken migratory game birds. Any persons, without a permit, may possess, dispose of and transport for the making of fishing flies, bed pillows, and mattresses, and for similar commercial uses, but not for millinery or ornamental use, feathers of wild ducks and wild geese lawfully killed, or seized and condemned by federal or state game authorities. Any person, without a permit, may transport lawfully killed migratory game birds into, within, or out of any state during and after the open seasons in the state where taken, subject to these and other conditions and restrictions.

If any person leaves migratory game birds in any place for any purpose, including temporary storage, the birds must have a tag attached with certain identifying information (hunter's name and address, total number of birds, species of birds and date of kill). Also, no person shall have in possession any migratory game birds belonging to another unless the birds are tagged:

(a) If such birds are dressed, one fully feathered wing must remain attached to each bird so as to permit species identification while being transported between the place where taken and the personal abode of the possessor or between the place where taken and a commercial preservation facility.

(b) Any package or container in which such birds are transported must have the name, address and hunting license number of the shipper, name and address of the consignee and an accurate statement of the numbers and kinds of birds contained therein clearly and conspicuously marked on the outside thereof.

Areas Closed To Waterfowl Hunting

Waterfowl hunting is prohibited in Virginia Beach in the waters and from the shores of Crystal Lake, Linkhorn and Broad Bay and Long Creek and their tributaries. Hog Island State Waterfowl Refuge in Surry County and all of the waters of the James River within a radius of 1,000 yards around that island are closed to hunting except from blinds erected by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

Hunting waterfowl is prohibited on the Dick Cross Waterfowl Refuge below Kerr Dam and in the Roanoke River downstream to High Rock.

Taking, attempting to take, pursuing or disturbing waterfowl is prohibited within the posted section of the Rappahannock River adjacent to Lands End Waterfowl Refuge in King George County.

Discharge of firearms is prohibited within 750 yards of a wildlife sanctuary in any city in Virginia.

The waters of the Great Hunting Creek embayment within the City of Alexandria, and the waters of the Potomac River in Fairfax County north of Dyke Marsh and south of the City of Alexandria and between the shore and a line 1,000 feet from the Maryland State line are declared a no hunting area. It shall be unlawful to hunt migratory waterfowl within this no hunting area (although waterfowl that have been wounded elsewhere, may be pursued into this area).

Taking, attempting to take or pursuing waterfowl on that portion of the New River that lies entirely within the boundaries of the Radford Army Ammunition Plant located in the counties of Montgomery and Pulaski.

Taking, attempting to take or pursuing or disturbing waterfowl is prohibited on the waters within the boundaries of Mason Neck State Park located in Fairfax County known as Kane Creek Waterfowl Refuge.

Taking, attempting to take, pursuing or disturbing waterfowl is prohibited on the waters of the Potomac River in Fairfax County adjacent to the Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge extending from Sycamore Point northeasterly to Hallowing Point including all tributary creeks, guts, and inlets along the shoreline.

****DID YOU KNOW???**

Non-toxic shot approved by the Department (steel, bismuth-tin, tungsten-iron, tungsten-polymer, tungsten-matrix, and tungsten-nickel-iron [HEVI-SHOT]) is required for all waterfowl hunting.

FALCONRY:

Season Dates*

Ducks: mergansers, coots, moorhens & gallinules	October 9 - 12 November 16 - February 28
Canada goose	November 16 - February 22
Brant and snow goose	November 16 - February 22

Bag Limit (all species):

Three (3) daily

Shooting/hawking hours
during all seasons: 1/2 hour
before sunrise to sunset

***NOTE:** Federal law does not permit falconry for waterfowl on Sunday.